

CENTRAL INTELLIGENCE AGENCY

INFORMATION REPORT

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COUNTRY Burma REPORT NO. 25X1

SUBJECT Karen National Defense Organization
Cooperation with Burma Communists
25X1 DATE DISTR. 21 July 1953

DATE OF INFO. REQUIREMENT NO.

PLACE ACQUIRED REFERENCES 25X1

BY CABLE

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25X1 Comment. Documents captured by the Burma Army and released in a summary to the press by the Burmese War Office indicate that as an outgrowth of a Karen National Defense Organization (KNDO)-Burma Communist Party (BCP) conference reported held at Ngainhtaung in the Delta on 10 June, a complete reorganization of the KNDO structure on the communist pattern is under way. This is presumed to pertain only to the Delta KNDO in spite of the similarity of the upper political command echelons with the Salween area KNDO. The latter may have been able to count on the Chinese Nationalists as allies to a large extent; have not been closely exposed to the communists; are not driven to as desperate a life and death search for allies by military pressure; and are close to Thailand where smuggling dividends have paid off.

25X1 the strength of the newly termed Karen Peoples Liberation Army (KPLA) in the Thaton-Delta area is estimated at 1,200 and that the KPLA is already running schools in the Thaton-Delta area under BCP direction.

1. The defunct Karen National Union (KNU) is now being reorganized on the communist framework as the Karen Liberation Movement. The Movement is presently under the control of an interim committee composed of Hunter THA MWE, Mahn BA ZAN, Mahn THEIN MAUNG, Mahn SEIN HAN, and Mahn AYE BI. The interim committee is in the process of drafting a constitution, and party cadres are being established in four zones of lower Burma.
2. The overall political reorganization is in the hands of Mahn BA ZAN. The political indoctrination of the KNDO is entrusted to the BCP-controlled Peoples Democratic Front.

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3. A subsequent meeting in June of various insurgent leaders at Eipe in the Thaton District was held for the purpose of determining the course of future joint action. This conference was attended by MIN MAUNG, Commander in Chief of the Kawthulay Armed Forces, and BCP, Communist Party Burma (CPB), Peoples Volunteer Organization (PVO), and Mon National Defense Organization (MNDO) leaders. The desired political education program was categorized as follows:

- a. Political ideologies.
- b. Karen revolutionary movement and its strategy.
- c. Marxism-Leninism.

25X1 [REDACTED] Comment. This move by the Delta KNDO is surprising only in that it has not occurred earlier. [REDACTED] this alliance is inevitable if the Anglo-Americans continue their attitude of disclaiming the Karens as "friends". The KNDO attitude is and has been that there is no other course open for their survival. To the hard-core KNDO leaders, who have a strong underlying mistrust of the Government of Burma (GOB), surrender or negotiation on GOB terms is and has been unthinkable. The significance of this alliance may be appreciable and may be to the detriment of the KNDO. It is likely that the gap between the Salween area KNDO and the Delta KNDO may be widened as a result of this alliance in view of the general repugnance to the communists in the Salween area. It is also possible that there will be a repetition of the fighting which has split all earlier, smaller, and more localized alliances of convenience between the KNDO and the communists.

25X1 [REDACTED] Comment. Mahn BA ZAN is the former head of the KNDO Delta Command, chairman of the Delta KNU, and signator of an assistance pact for the KNDO with the BCP in 1951 which was loudly renounced by other top KNDO leaders at that time.

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